

## **South Carolina teachers travel to Los Angeles to receive national recognition**

Dear Friends of Education:

Today I am traveling to Los Angeles for the Milken Family Foundation's National Education Conference. While there, I'll be involved in three days of workshops, discussion sessions, and presentations by nationally recognized scholars and practitioners in the field of education. One of the first topics on our agenda is the Teacher Advancement Program.

Forty-three schools participate in the South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program (SCTAP) which was established in 1998 as an initiative of the Milken Family Foundation. TAP's goal is to draw more talented people to the teaching profession—and keep them there—by making it more attractive and rewarding to be a teacher.

The Milken conference culminates on Saturday with a gala evening ceremony where the 2007 Milken educators will be recognized. Among those being honored this year with \$25,000 cash awards are Lexington Middle School math teacher Genia Webb and Sumter High School choral director Eric Wilkinson.

Genia's class is not a traditional math classroom. Her students are excited about coming to class and disappointed when it is time to leave. Lexington Middle School's "Making Middle Grades Work" instructional theme demands rigor, relevance and relationships, and Genia's student-centered approach exemplifies this theme. She is an Academic Assistance teacher who provides supplementary instruction to students who have scored below basic on PACT. Genia is an ADEPT Evaluator and Girl's Basketball Coach.

Eric conducts the Concert Choir, Chamber Choir, Show Choir, and Freshman Choir. His choirs' performances are of the highest caliber, and his musical ensembles consistently earn Superior ratings at state choral festivals. His students annually earn placement in the All-State Choir and Governor's School of the Performing Arts. Since Eric has been the Sumter High choir director, the size of the choir has doubled and the music course offerings have grown by 40 percent.

Over the past 10 years, there have been 45 National Educator Award recipients from the Palmetto State whose cash awards have totaled more than \$1 million.

The Milken programs and SCTAP are just two of the ways we are working to reform public education in South Carolina and elevate the teaching program. To read about other initiatives, visit the Division of Educator Quality's Web site and read this week's lead story about our new Teacher Renewal Center.

Sincerely,

Jim Rex  
State Superintendent of Education